

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-08

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 ARA-06 INR-05 NSC-05 NSCE-00 L-01

IO-03 CIAE-00 DODE-00 SP-02 PM-03 /048 W

----- 036758

R 091826Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7969

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMCONSUL BELIZE

C O N F I D E N T I A L LONDON 00426

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: UK, GT, BH

SUBJECT: PRICE IN LONDON

BRIEF, INFORMAL DESCRIPTION OF UK-BELIZEAN TALKS IN LONDON THIS WEEK, DETAILED UK APPROACH TO NEGOTIATIONS WITH GUATEMALANS AWAITS MINISTERIAL APPROBATION AND WILL BE COMMUNICATED TO USG LATER THIS MONTH. END SUMMARY.

1. BELIZE PREMIER PRICE ACCOMPANIED BY MINISTERS SHOMAN AND COURTNEY VISITED LONDON JANUARY 5-7 TO DISCUSS PREPARATIONS FOR FORTHCOMING TALKS BETWEEN BRITAIN AND GUATEMALA ON BELIZE'S FUTURE. PATRICK DUFF, HEAD OF FCO ATLANTIC AND WEST INDIAN DEPARTMENT, BRIEFED EMBASSY OFFICER JANUARY 9 ON THE RESULTS OF THE CONVERSATIONS. THE BELIZEAN DELEGATION MET SEVERAL TIMES WITH PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY TED ROWLANDS. ON WEDNESDAY, ROWLANDS LEFT TOWN ON A LONG-PLANNED TRIP AND DUFF STRESSED THAT SUGGESTIONS COMING OUT OF THE CONSULTATIONS THEREFORE REMAIN SUBJECT TO ROWLANDS' FINAL APPROVAL. FOREIGN SECRETARY CALLAGHAL, WHO HAS VERY PRECISE NOTIONS ABOUT THE BELIZEAN DISPUTE, HAS OF COURSE NOT YET ACCEPTED ANY OF THE EMBRYONIC PROPOSALS. WITHOUT MINISTERIAL APPROVAL, CONFIDENTIAL

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DUFF WAS UNDEPSTANDABLY RELUCTANT TO BE DETAILED ABOUT

THE UK-BELIZEAN DISCUSSIONS. HE EXPECTS A DEFINITE UK POSITION TO DEVELOP WITHIN A WEEK OR SO AND THAT THIS POSITION WILL BE COMMUNICATED TO THE USG. FOR THE MOMENT HOWEVER, THE INGREDIENTS ARE NOT "PROPERLY COOKED."

2. IN BROAD CONVERSATION, DUFF NEVERTHELESS GAVE SOME OF THE OUTLINE OF WHAT TRANSPIRED DURING PRICE'S TRIP. THERE WAS GENERAL AGREEMENT THAT TALKS WITH THE GUATEMALANS SHOULD BEGIN DURING THE SECOND WEEK IN FEBRUARY, PROBABLY IN NEW ORLEANS. TO GIVE THE CONFERENCE LESS OF A SENSE OF DEHA VU AND MORE OF AN EXTRA CHARGE, THE BRITISH MAY PROPOSE THAT ROWLANDS PERSONALLY LEAD THE UK DELEGATION AND THAT FOREIGN MINISTER MOLINA AND PREMIER PRICE REPRESENT THEIR GOVERNMENTS. SUCH HIGH-LEVEL REPRESENTATION MIGHT ALSO SIGNAL TO THE GUATEMALANS THE IMPORTANCE HMG ATTACHES TO REAL PROGRESS IN THE DISCUSSION

3. DUFF IMPLIED THAT THE UK NEGOTIATING PACKAGE WILL NOT CONTAIN ANY STARTLING NEW PROPOSITIONS. A SERIES OF DRAFT TREATIES DEALING WITH PORT ACCESS. FREE TRANSIT OF GOODS, TERRITORIAL WATERS, ETC. HAVE BEEN COMPOSED TO AVOID LANGUAGE WHICH THE GUATEMALANS MIGHT FIND PROVOCATIVE. NEW WOPDING WOULD CENTER ON "SECURITY" OR "MUTUAL SECURITY" BETWEEN GUATEMALA AND BELIZE RATHER THAN MATTERS OF "RECOGNITION."

4. HMG HAS NOT YET DECIDED WHETHER, AS A GESTURE OF GOOD FAITH, TO REDUCE ITS GARRISON IN BELIZE PRIOR TO NEGOTIATIONS. FROM DUFF'S BRIEFING, ONE HAD THE IMPRESSION THAT THE FOREIGN OFFICE AND MINISTRY OF DEFENSE HERE DO NOT SEE EYE TO EYE ON THE ISSUE. DUFF SAID THAT IF THE GARRISON CONCLUDES IT IS MILITARILY SECURE THEN HMG WOULD BE PREPARED TO CONSIDER SOME LIMITED REDUCTION. FOREIGN MINISTER MOLINA'S PUBLIC DISCUSSION OF THE SUBJECT, INSINUATING THAT SUCH A REDUCTION IS AN INFORMAL PRECONDITION TO TALKS, DOES NOT HELP HMG MOVE TOWARDS A FAVORABLE DECISION, ACCORDING TO DUFF.

5. TWO IMPORTANT ISSUES DID NOT RECEIVE MUCH ATTENTION IN THE UK-BELIZEAN DISCUSSION, DUFF SAID. FIRST, A UK CONFIDENTIAL

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SECURITY GUARANTEE IS IN THE FRONT OF BELIZEAN MINDS, BUT THE FCO REITERATED ITS LONG-STANDING POLICY ON THE SUBJECT AND THE TOPIC WAS DROPPED. SECOND, THE PARTICIPANTS DID NOT DISCUSS POSSIBLE TERRITORIAL CONCESSIONS. THE BELIZEAN VIEW IS WELL KNOWN HERE, DUFF SAID, AND THE UK IS STILL UNCOMFORTABLE AND UNSURE ON THE ISSUE.

6. DUFF'S BRIEFING SHOULD NOT BE DISCUSSED OUTSIDE US

OFFICIAL CIRCLES.
RICHARDSON

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NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: NEGOTIATIONS, TERRITORIAL CLAIMS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 09 JAN 1976
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: coburnhl
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976LONDON00426
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760009-0311
From: LONDON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760172/aaaclub.tel
Line Count: 117
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: coburnhl
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 12 MAY 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <12 MAY 2004 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <25 OCT 2004 by coburnhl>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PRICE IN LONDON BRIEF, INFORMAL DESCRIPTION OF UK-BELIZEAN TALKS IN LON-
TAGS: PBOR, OVIP, UK, GT, BH, (PRICE, GEORGE C)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006